



MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
From: Carol Guthrie for Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Re: morning news conference urging passage of H.R. 6331 in Senate

Please see below comments made by Finance Chairman Baucus this morning at a news conference urging swift Senate passage of H.R. 6331, the House-passed Medicare bill based on Baucus's own Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (S. 3101). The Senate is expected to consider the bill in the coming days. Comments from Chairman Baucus as delivered:

"It is right this morning that we are standing near the Ohio Clock, because time is ticking. Time is ticking down on this Senate work period, and time is ticking toward a deadline on Medicare.

"We have to stop a severe payment cut that could threaten seniors' care. Time is ticking. But time has not run out, and the Senate can still score a victory for seniors – by passing the House-approved Medicare bill.

"The House-passed bill closely tracks my own legislation, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act. The House passed it by a six-to-one margin on Tuesday, with overwhelming bipartisan support. Today, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill as well.

"I wrote the legislation to make sure seniors in my home state of Montana, and everywhere, can get quality, affordable health care. The bill does right by low-income and rural seniors. It expands emergency health care for veterans in rural areas and increase payments for physicians who work in rural areas. It stops a payment cut to providers and gives them a decent increase in reimbursement, so seniors will be able to keep seeing the doctors they need to see. And the bill will reduce overpayments to private Medicare plans that are getting more than their share of taxpayer dollars,

"I have worked for months to write a strong Medicare bill that could pass both chambers with wide support. Tuesday's overwhelming House vote makes clear that the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act can be that bipartisan vehicle, and the Senate is taking it up just in time.

"The clock is ticking, but this Medicare bill can be a slam dunk at the buzzer for forty-four million American seniors who depend on Medicare. We have to do what's right – for seniors in rural areas like Montana and all areas of the country. I urge my colleagues to support the House-passed Medicare bill when it comes to a vote this week."

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